

INSPIRING THE



FUTURE MAKERS



The Lehigh
University
Strategic Plan
2023



Many wonder what
the future holds.

At Lehigh, we
shape it together.

This mindset has inspired
Lehigh University—and driven
our excellence—from the
very beginning.

We are a community of future makers—people who are inspired to think deeply and create grounded, pragmatic solutions through our research and scholarship. We are located in a historical, global epicenter for innovation, and we carry that energy forward in our work today.

Together, we must meet the needs of a dynamic world by prioritizing innovative, student-centric and interdisciplinary approaches to education and research. We seek to understand the intersection of technology and human work and embrace disruption to build a better future. We must search for knowledge to identify, understand and solve real-world problems, which will, in turn, redefine the impact and place of higher education in our world.

Our students, faculty, staff and alumni are the people who will help to make the future. Our strategic plan, *Inspiring the Future Makers*, builds on the investments and work of the past decade, which expanded our reach, made clear our commitment to support a diverse, equitable and inclusive community, and established a flourishing new College of Health.

Taking pride in Lehigh's strengths in interdisciplinary education and research and a strong sense of community, our plan articulates a shared vision for new directions and bold possibilities. It will continuously evolve through implementation to be responsive to our changing world. Developed with the input and support of our community, it presents our aspirations and goals—goals designed to help Lehigh lead in what we do best.

The way forward is not yet defined.
The future is ours for the making.

Joseph J. Helble '82
President of Lehigh University

Our Future. Our Lehigh.

TO ESTABLISH WHERE WE'RE GOING, WE BUILT ON WHO WE ARE AND WHERE WE'VE BEEN.

Lehigh's last comprehensive strategic plan, *Advancing Our Intellectual Footprint*, served as our foundation. Informed by our past successes and learnings, university leadership and four working groups of faculty and staff engaged the entire Lehigh community in developing a plan to guide the university over the next decade.

WE LISTENED DEEPLY TO THE VOICES IN OUR COMMUNITY.

The strategic planning process, *Our Future, Our Lehigh*, was an open dialogue on the strategic direction of the university, conducted via both in-person and virtual campus engagement from Fall 2022 through February 2023.

This engagement was structured around four themes: Education With Purpose, Lehigh User Experience, Research for Impact and Smart Growth. Over the span of 105 sessions attended by faculty, staff and students, 2,444 unique individuals participated in the planning process, producing nearly 350 ideas and 1,000 comments. We surveyed 76,000 Lehigh community members, including alumni and families, to learn what initiatives mattered most to them.

A synthesis of this input informed our new strategic plan: *Inspiring the Future Makers*.



BY THE NUMBERS

2,444
Perspectives



IN 105
Sessions

OVER 5
Months

ACROSS 4
Working
Groups

Our goals are in service to Lehigh's mission, vision and values

MISSION

To advance learning through the integration of teaching, research and service to others.

VISION STATEMENT

Lehigh University prepares graduates to engage with the world and lead lives of meaning.

CORE VALUES

Essential and enduring tenets—a small set of timeless guiding principles that require no external justification; they have intrinsic value and importance.

- INTEGRITY AND HONESTY
- EQUITABLE COMMUNITY
- ACADEMIC FREEDOM
- CURIOSITY
- INTELLECTUAL COLLABORATION
- COMMITMENT TO EXCELLENCE
- LEADERSHIP

OUR PLAN

This is our strategy for the next 10 years.

Lehigh University is a premier residential research university—one that is distinctive in our deep inclusion of undergraduates working side by side with faculty and graduate students in the discovery of new knowledge. Our undergraduate and graduate students, faculty and staff are empowered to shape and make the future. As a community, we seek to inspire deep thinking and address real-world problems, especially through the intersection of technology and humanity because that is what the future needs. We work to discover new knowledge and to define and solve authentic problems through our research and scholarship.

Within 10 years, our committed, mission-driven, diverse faculty and staff will inspire students and researchers to achieve the highest outcomes in an environment that is among the best places to work in higher education. We will break boundaries in pursuit of novel solutions to real-world issues.

We will equip students with the skills and knowledge needed for academic, career and life success. This will have a lasting positive impact on their lives, enabling them to thrive, adapt and make valuable contributions to society to their fullest capability.

We will look to double our research activity and number of Ph.D.s awarded, and triple our graduate student enrollment. We seek to be a national leader in student learning outcomes, including our graduation rates and six-month placements after graduation.



WHEN WE “Make it New”

we lead with curiosity, embrace intellectual risk taking, develop innovative pedagogy and conduct groundbreaking research.



WHEN WE “Make a Difference”

we apply new knowledge to existing problems, break down traditional disciplinary barriers, engage in authentic learning and expose the world to new ways of thinking.



WHEN WE “Make it Together”

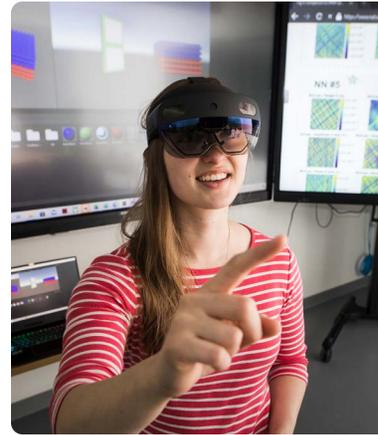
we collaborate and connect with our communities and partners, approach the world with humility and a desire to serve and care for and value each other.

Inspiring the Future Makers outlines three goals that articulate a vision for how we innovate, make change happen and do that work together—because together, we do better work. When we bring diverse people and perspectives together, we also discover new opportunities to innovate.

Each goal is integral to inspiring the world's future makers—the people whose work and insight will shape the future of our community, our economy and our planet.

Innovate, take risks and spark curiosity to become a leader in the discovery and sharing of new knowledge.

Making a better future requires us to innovate fearlessly—discovery requires taking risks and accepting that failure precedes success. Our culture must empower people to take the intellectual and scholarly risks that enable the innovation needed to improve the human condition.



We will explore beyond the boundaries of current knowledge and provide opportunities for students to engage in this work. We will work to understand and exploit connections between disciplines such as technology and business or health and art. We will embrace the critical and disruptive approaches needed to reveal new knowledge and define new areas of inquiry.

TO DO THIS WE WILL:

→ **Embrace risk taking and a philosophy of fast failure as vital to innovation and learning**

We will change how we teach and modernize student and faculty assessment to encourage academic risk taking and intellectual curiosity. We will create opportunities for high-risk, high-reward research while encouraging novel approaches to education and pedagogy. We will enable faculty, staff and students to employ entrepreneurial thinking to enhance our internal operations and our external impact.

→ **Pursue understanding in emerging areas**

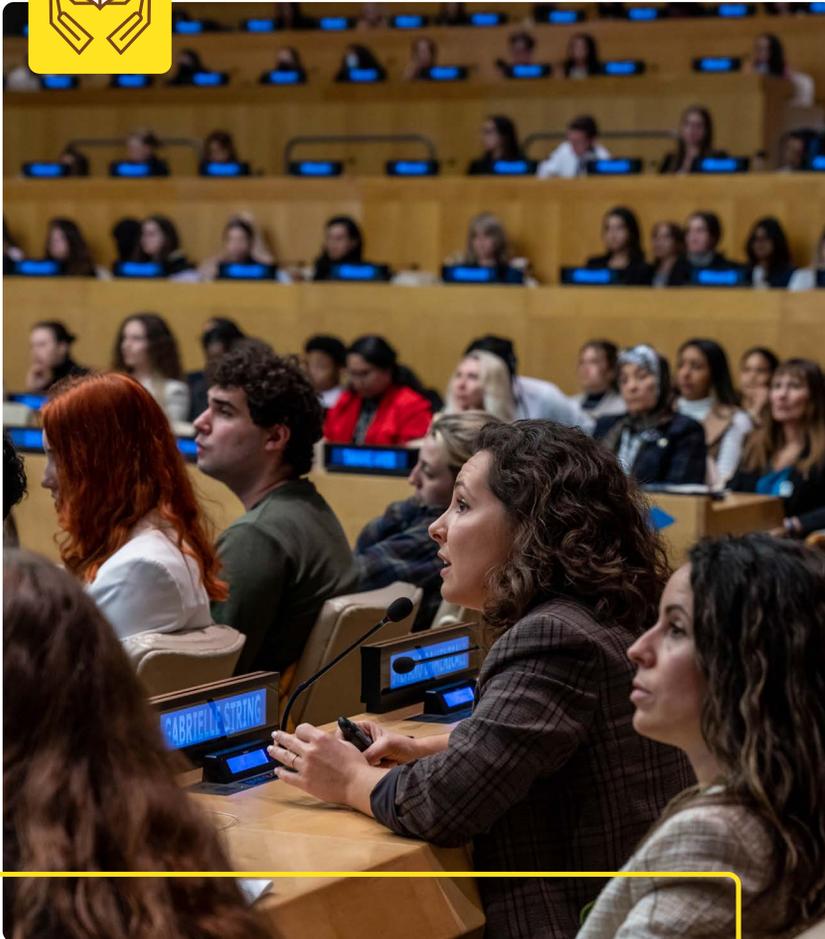
New areas of inquiry emerge as ideas; technologies and disciplines are created and developed. To lead in research, Lehigh faculty, staff and students must help to define the questions and approaches that will guide others as they explore and disrupt these new domains. We will work beyond disciplines, engage in constructive discourse and take on complex problems because we have the capacity to do so, and the world needs our leadership.

→ **Be nimble, dynamic and future-focused**

Lehigh will chart the course to the future, challenging complacency and confronting the status quo. We will prioritize staff and faculty development and recognize scholarship and research achievements. We will evaluate existing programs and structures against their future value, and we will focus on the future as we develop new ways of delivering services and conducting our work.

Break boundaries, think differently and translate theory to practice to address society's most important challenges.

Critical challenges are best understood and addressed by bringing together diverse perspectives and experiences in pursuit of solutions. Students are best prepared to succeed when they learn to connect knowledge and skills across disciplines.



To realize our potential to impact the world's critical challenges, universities must lower boundaries between disciplines as we pursue our research and educational missions. We will adopt radically interdisciplinary approaches to education and research, and expand opportunities for students to apply theory as they learn by doing. We will attract the best faculty, staff and students to create an environment in which we are addressing the most important questions. We will foster the development of interdisciplinary research and translation teams that connect solution-seekers with solution-makers.

TO DO THIS WE WILL:

→ Focus deeply in interdisciplinary research and education

Lehigh will remove boundaries between disciplines to foster the most creative approaches to problem solving and learning. We will develop effective teams with the skills and experience to meet evolving societal needs. Our academic programs and structures will prepare our graduates to enter the workforce with both timely and timeless skills. We will choose to focus our efforts in vital research areas, investing where Lehigh can make the greatest impact. Our interdisciplinary research will tackle some of the world's most complicated challenges and deliver tangible results.

→ Build and strengthen external partnerships

Lehigh will nurture trust and develop partnerships with other universities, organizations and companies to multiply our impact. Our existing and emerging strengths in focused areas of research and education provide opportunities for us to become a valued partner, allowing for innovative collaborations that will distinguish us in higher education. We will streamline our policies and processes and enhance our visibility so that we become a preferred partner for organizations that share key elements of our mission.

→ Become a user-focused university

Lehigh will integrate operational excellence in every facet of our work, from academics to administration, fostering a culture where every individual is empowered to identify and remove barriers to improving our work. We will prioritize a positive and productive experience for all partners and community members. Every interaction. Every time. By appreciating and engaging with diverse perspectives, Lehigh will achieve the most user-centered experience to enable the most positive outcomes.

→ Lead in student outcomes through building from theory to practice to expertise

Theory guides and informs practice. Practice matures to expertise. Developing solutions to societal problems, from inception to implementation, is a transformative educational experience. Lehigh will provide every student, whether graduate or undergraduate, with opportunities for broad and deep experiential learning and entrepreneurship training so they can apply the knowledge and theoretical perspectives that they have learned and developed. We will ensure the intellectual and social development of students while activating their thoughtful participation in, and contribution to, society. Through this approach, Lehigh students will be best prepared for their first job and for jobs that don't yet exist.

Foster belonging, cultivate connections and heighten Lehigh's global and regional impact to strengthen community.

The future we make together is better than the one we make alone. Lehigh's mission describes our responsibility to impact society through service to others. As a leader in higher education, we need to have the humility to recognize that we don't always know best. Working together with our broader communities helps us to better understand and prioritize the work that we do in research and education.



We seek to form a deeply connected community built on trust and belonging for our diverse students, faculty, staff and alumni. We will recruit and retain talented people from all backgrounds. We will connect and engage our alumni and friends who are integral to Lehigh's future. And we will establish deep partnerships in Bethlehem, the Lehigh Valley, regionally and globally to understand the issues, challenges and questions where we can make a difference.

TO DO THIS WE WILL:

→ **Strengthen and grow community engagement and service, and partnerships within Bethlehem and the Lehigh Valley**

Lehigh is a part of the fabric of the South Bethlehem community. The Lehigh Valley is one of the fastest-growing places in the Northeast for living and working. Lehigh has the opportunity to contribute to this growth and vibrancy, strengthening our university community by becoming more closely connected with our broader region. We value local residents and community partners in the vibrant Bethlehem South Side neighborhood and are committed to being a great neighbor. Through investments of time, leadership and resources, Lehigh will work to strengthen our community engagement and service and strategic partnerships.

→ **Enhance access and equity, develop trust and ensure a sense of belonging for all members of the Lehigh community**

We must support a living, learning and working environment in which all members of our communities and teams feel comfortable in bringing their full selves to the work, and in which everyone can benefit from the opportunities that we create. Lehigh will enhance a culture of belonging and foster a welcoming and equitable environment. We will expand scholarship and fellowship support so that the most transformative and innovative aspects of the Lehigh education are available to all. We will encourage faculty and staff to support students and one another—strengthening our sense of community—and we will recognize and celebrate those who do this work. We will welcome our alumni back to the campus community and build more opportunities for alumni to learn and reconnect throughout their lifetimes.

→ **Broaden Lehigh's global perspective and impact**

Our students, faculty and staff come from around the world and our educational and research activities span the globe. A global lens is essential in all that we do. We seek to expand our reach and visibility through targeted efforts that leverage our existing strengths and relationships. As a trusted global partner to our local, national and international programs, we will collaborate to discover solutions that drive societal change and advance experiential learning and real-world application.



How we make it happen

While our strategic goals guide our direction, our key initiatives define specific projects and actions that support these goals and determine where we will make investments. These key initiatives span the three strategic goals.

We will respond to changes and adjust our actions as needed while recognizing that in many areas sustained focus and effort will be needed to achieve our goals.

Key Initiatives



→ Redefine a deeply interdisciplinary education

All Lehigh students will be able to participate in boldly interdisciplinary programs and access the educational opportunities available across the university. They will embrace their intellectual curiosity, explore diverse academic programs and develop both the timely and timeless skills needed for long-term professional and personal success. We will expand inter-college programs for undergraduates. We will transform Ph.D. education to be student-centered and provide specific training relevant to the full range of Ph.D. career pathways.

→ Invest in strategic interdisciplinary research

Critical problems require a holistic approach to problem solving. Lehigh will make key investments in faculty hires, facilities renovation and construction, and support for the development of large grant proposals. We will build an interdisciplinary structure that supports high-paced, high-reward research. We aim to double our research output within 10 years.

Our research areas of focus are:

- Improving health through assessments and interventions that occur outside of traditional health care settings.
- Innovation for sustainable infrastructure and communities.
- Interdisciplinary research and creative work to understand conflict and change.

→ Lead in educational innovation

Lehigh will apply learning science and “Universal Design for Inquiry” (UDI) to innovate the classroom experience, maximize learning and personalize education for each student. To institutionalize innovation in academic programs, we will develop an incubator where faculty and staff can focus on creation of the most innovative new programs and approaches to student learning and thriving, in an environment where they are supported and inspired.

→ Transform Mountaintop campus

Lehigh will fully activate the 740-acre Mountaintop campus and transform it into a vital destination and resource for the Lehigh community and beyond. We will use Mountaintop as a location for big and messy work. We will explore the creation of a graduate student and postdoc village, spaces for corporate partnerships, inviting outdoor areas, retail and community event space.

→ Enhance the shared Bethlehem experience

Lehigh will expand our partnerships and community engagements throughout Bethlehem’s South Side and the Asa Packer campus, enriching the community and expanding our impact. We will create opportunities for the community to come together and have shared experiences on and off our campus.

→ Cultivate a lifelong Lehigh

Lehigh will expand our graduate and professional offerings to be part of the lifelong learning experience. Lehigh will provide learning opportunities for alumni and for others who are seeking to gain new skills and credentials, and advance in their profession and life.



Foundational Initiatives

We must prepare a foundation to support the success of our actions and have identified projects that will ensure that our infrastructure and values are in place as we move toward our goals. These enabling projects will help Lehigh succeed.



→ A Lehigh for everyone

Lehigh will be a place where everyone feels valued. The Lehigh experience must be welcoming, engaging and personal. For newcomers, the onboarding, orientation and mentoring programs will be welcoming and informative. We will review policies for equity and inclusiveness and provide resources for physical and mental wellness. We will continue to activate Lehigh's 2021–2026 Diversity, Inclusion & Equity plan, further promoting and developing a community committed to cultural diversity as an essential part of the learning environment.

→ An expanded and strengthened research environment

We will expand and enhance research facilities, improve our ability to partner with key external stakeholders, increase support for faculty seeking external funding for their work, and invest in the support and development of graduate students, postdocs and research staff.

→ An organization of the future

We will develop standards of service for key elements of our operations and educate members of our community to uphold these expectations. We will make processes and systems more efficient so that people at Lehigh can spend more time doing the things that are most important to their and the university's success. We will use innovation and technology to enhance experiences, not replace personal interaction. We will experiment with new models to develop services that are responsive to the changing environment.

→ Decision making informed by qualitative and quantitative data and analysis

We will consistently use data to support and facilitate decision making. We will more broadly share data and train Lehigh staff and faculty to use our data to measure and improve the way that we work. Our standards will include transparency and open communication, and we will create a continuous feedback loop to maintain accountability.

Future Makers rise to the moment.

Our strategic plan provides a visionary direction for Lehigh's future makers over the next decade and reaffirms our commitment to be an institution where all can thrive.

Every destination starts as a journey. As we chart our path, we will identify ambitious and specific actions. Guided by our strategy we will continue to inspire each other in shaping the future. We will define success, assess and communicate our progress, and course correct as needed. **We will make it new, make a difference and make it together, because the future is ours for the making.**

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lehigh.edu/strategicplan



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